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REMARKS

The application has been reviewed in light of the final Office Action dated May 8, 2009. Claims 1-9 and 11-14 were pending in this application, with claim 10 having previously been canceled, without prejudice or disclaimer. By the present Amendment, claim 6 has been canceled, without prejudice or disclaimer, claims 1, 3-5, 7, 9, 11 and 12 have been amended to address informalities therein, and claims 1 and 9 have been amended to include the features formerly recited in now-canceled claim 6. Applicant submits that no new matter and new issues have been introduced, and therefore entry of the Amendment is requested. Claims 1-5, 7-9 and 11-14 would remain pending upon entry of this Amendment, with claims 1 and 9 being in independent form.

Claims 1-3, 6-9 and 11-14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as purportedly anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,968,225 to Vu. Claims 4 and 5 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as purportedly unpatentable over Vu.

Applicant respectfully submits that the present application is allowable over the cited art, for at least the reason that the cited art does not disclose or suggest the aspects of the present application of reconstructing images immediately after the three-dimensional measurement mode begins, using data including data acquired in the pulse sequence performed without slice-encode just before the three-dimensional measurement.

Vu, as understood by applicant, proposes a magnetic resonance imaging system configured for acquiring MR images in 2D and 3D, wherein 3D imaging is performed by applying a 3D pulse sequence with a slice encoding gradient S₃ and rewinder gradient S₄, and localizing and monitoring are performed by turning off or disabling the slice encoding and rewinder gradients S₃, S₄ to acquire 2D MR data. When it is desirable to return to the 3D

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imaging mode, the slice encoding and rewinder gradients (S_3 , S_4) are re-enabled for acquisition of 3D MR data.

However, in the system of Vu, as understood by applicant, reconstruction of images does NOT commence immediately after the three-dimensional measurement mode begins, by using data including data acquired in the pulse sequence performed without the slice encode just before the three-dimensional measurement.

Instead, in Vu, the pulse sequence is applied in three dimensions to acquire 3D MR data for the 3D imaging volume before image reconstruction commences. Stated another way, image reconstruction does NOT (and cannot) commence in the system of Vu until a set of the 3D MR data for the 3D imaging volume is collected.

Vu says nothing regarding using data acquired in the pulse sequence performed without slice-encode to reconstruct images immediately after the three-dimensional measurement mode commences.

Vu, as understood, simply does NOT disclose or suggest the aspects of the present application of reconstructing images *immediately after* the three-dimensional measurement mode begins, *using data including data acquired in the pulse sequence performed without slice-encode* just before the three-dimensional measurement.

Applicant submits that the cited art, even when considered along with common sense and common knowledge to one skilled in the art, does *NOT* render unpatentable the above-mentioned aspects of the present application.

Accordingly, applicant respectfully submits that independent claims 1 and 9, and the claims depending therefrom, are allowable over the cited art.

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In view of the remarks hereinabove, applicant submits that the application is allowable.

Applicant earnestly solicits the allowance of the application.

If a petition for an extension of time is required to make this response timely, this paper should be considered to be such petition. The Patent Office is hereby authorized to charge any required fees, and to credit any overpayment, to our Deposit Account No. 03-3125.

If a telephone interview could advance the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to call the undersigned attorney.

Respectfully submitted,


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